

Military and Veterans Affairs Office, has assisted countless constituents with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. Today, Richard begins his retirement, but he will always continue to be an advocate for the men and women who've worn our nation's uniform.

Richard Garza was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1948. In 1961, he moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and has been a California resident since. From 1968 to 1970, Richard was drafted and served in the United States Army. After his period of service, he continued his education. He received a Bachelor's of Arts in Interdisciplinary Social Science from California State University, San Francisco and a Master's of Public Administration from California State University, Hayward.

Richard began his public service career in 1974 as a Benefits Counselor and Program Administrator with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. In 1980, he continued serving veterans as the Veterans Service Officer of Sonoma County. Since 2003, Richard has been with the Military and Veterans Affairs Office of Monterey County. As Director of the county office, he has assisted veterans with the Department of Veterans Affairs, and welcomed home returning troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, Richard is the first individual in the State of California to become a Certified Veterans Advocate through the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

Madam Speaker, Richard Garza has dedicated his life to taking care of our veterans and troops. I know I speak for the whole House when I both commend him for his dedication to public service and congratulate him on the occasion of his retirement.

CONGRATULATING 17 AFRICAN NATIONS ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

SPEECH OF

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 2010

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my best wishes to the people of Somalia living throughout the world on the 50th anniversary of Somali Independence.

It is my pleasure and honor to represent a large and vibrant Somali-American community in Minnesota. I want to offer my congratulations on this special day as they continue to work to advance the cause of peace.

I am grateful for the contributions of Somali-Americans to Minnesota's rich tradition of diversity. The Somali-American community continues to enrich our state through its lively culture, optimism, and wisdom.

Sadly, Somalis in their homeland have endured a tremendous amount of strife and suffering. On this anniversary we must continue to focus on diplomatic efforts to create a lasting peace for the people of Somalia. I continue to have faith that renewed diplomatic efforts will lead to good governance, respect for human rights, and democracy for the people of Somalia.

RECOGNIZING CAPTAIN ROBERT R. O'BRIEN, JR., ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AS COMMANDER OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD NEW YORK SECTOR

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 2010

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the achievements of Captain Robert R. O'Brien, Jr., on the occasion of his retirement as Commander of the United States Coast Guard's New York Sector. He has served our Nation, and its greatest city, with distinction, and all Americans owe him a debt of gratitude.

Captain O'Brien assumed command of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Sector New York on June 15, 2006 after completing his previous assignment as the Commander of the USCG's Marine Safety Office in Hampton Roads, Virginia. I know that my distinguished colleagues join me in extending our appreciation and gratitude to Captain O'Brien, who throughout his career has courageously and selflessly dedicated himself to protecting, defending and serving his fellow Americans.

Captain Robert O'Brien's remarkable career in the United States Coast Guard has spanned more than four decades. Enlisting in the Coast Guard in 1970 after leaving the Roman Catholic Seminary, he first served aboard the United States Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Laurel in North Carolina. In 1976, he was assigned as Officer-in-Charge of the USCGC Blackberry, also stationed in North Carolina. Upon his promotion in 1979 to Chief Boatswain's Mate, he was transferred to the largest Aids to Navigation Team in the Atlantic Area as Officer-in-Charge.

In 1983, Robert O'Brien was promoted to Lieutenant, and for the next 20 years served with distinction in assignments that found him in areas ranging from Galveston, Texas to Detroit, Michigan, and numerous places in between. Upon his promotion to Captain in 2003, he assumed command of the Marine Safety Office in Hampton Roads, Virginia. After serving in that capacity for three years, he then became Commander of the New York Sector, where he has been stationed since.

Throughout his long and distinguished career in the United States Coast Guard, Captain Robert O'Brien has earned a number of awards and honors. He has received the Meritorious Service Medal, the Coast Guard Commendation Medal, the Coast Guard Achievement Medal and the Coast Guard Commandant's Letter of Commendation Ribbon, among many others.

Captain Robert O'Brien was born in Savannah, Georgia and raised in Ridgeland, South Carolina. He and his wife, Martha, have three children: Reid, Jennifer and Caroline, all of whom must be tremendously proud of their father's accomplishments and honorable service to this Nation.

Madam Speaker, in recognition of his lifetime of service to this country, I request that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Captain Robert R. O'Brien, Jr., a distinguished member of our armed services and a patriotic

American who has devoted his professional life in service to our country. Captain O'Brien's selfless and enduring dedication to our Nation provides a worthy example for all of us.

HONORING REV. MARK DUANE HAIL

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 2010

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Rev. Mark Duane Hail, who has lived a dedicated life of service to his community, the ministry, and to our Nation. Reverend Hail is a man of many remarkable gifts and talents, and has been devoted to employing those gifts to benefit his fellow man.

In June 2010, Reverend Hail retired from the ministry after 27 years. He was ordained a minister in the Southern Baptist Church in 1983 and has served as pastor of several churches in Pulaski County, Kentucky. Mark was also an ordained deacon, teaching Sunday School and serving on church committees. Reverend Hail was also a veteran of the Korean War—serving in the United States Navy from 1955 through 1959. He was awarded the China Service Medal and Good Conduct Medal. He later served as the Chaplain of the American Legion Post 38 in Somerset.

Before entering the ministry, he taught in the Somerset Independent City School system for 30 years. After retiring from teaching in 1988, he remained active in the schools and in the community, joining the Retired Teachers Association, where he served as president in 1989, as well as serving two terms on the Somerset Independent Schools Board of Education. In 1990, he was elected as vice chairman of the Board of the Somerset Independent School System. In addition to his career as an educator and minister, Mark was also a farmer in the Dabney community for 12 years, worked as a real estate agent with Gosser Real Estate for 20 years, and was a member of the board of directors of the Somerset Pulaski County Development Foundation.

As an elected official in Somerset, Reverend Hail was very active in politics throughout his life. Mark was elected to three terms as the chairman of the Republican Party of Pulaski County. He served as county campaign chair for numerous Republican officials, including President George H.W. Bush, and Senators MITCH MCCONNELL and JIM BUNNING. He was a member of the Republican Lincoln Club and served as a Republican precinct officer for over 20 years. He was a Kentucky Colonel and active in many civic organizations.

These accomplishments only scratch the surface of Reverend Hail's accomplishments and contributions to his community. His work serves as a pattern for all of us who desire to serve our Nation. The Bible in First Timothy instructs us that "the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor." Madam Speaker, Reverend Hail has proven he is worthy of at least that much and more.